

THE WILSON BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at Pittsburgh, Pa., on December 28 and 29, Friday and Saturday, with the American Association. Plans are now being matured for a good meeting on this occasion. The American Ornithologists' Union will hold its fifty-second Stated Meeting in Chicago beginning October 22d next. This will be the second Chicago meeting.

RECENT YEARS have marked the appearance of a number of small booklets designed to assist the writer of articles for publication. The technique of writing is being given more and more attention constantly. There is still a good deal of conflict in the rules of editorial style, but less than formerly. Today the larger publishing centers have adopted their own rules leading to uniformity; it is probable that eventually these rules will all be reduced to one code. In the meantime writers and editors will continue to labor with the rules of capitalization, punctuation, quotation, divisions, footnotes, etc.

In the hope of being of service to our contributors we shall offer here a few comments on several of the useful style codes now available. It seems to be generally agreed that the writer needs three tools as special aids in his English technique; these are, a dictionary, a book of synonyms or thesaurus, and a style book. An understanding of the principles of English grammar and composition is presupposed. There are two dictionaries available in this country. We prefer to follow the Standard Dictionary, but Webster's International Dictionary seems to be more generally recommended. Probably the final authority on the English language is the "Oxford" Dictionary. There are several books on synonyms and antonyms. The most recent one we know of is "Allen's Synonyms and Antonyms", 1921 (Harper & Brothers, New York). Similar works by other authors—e. g., March, Fernald, Roget, Crabb, and Fallows—will serve the purpose as well.

Our chief interest centers in a good style code. Most newspapers, magazines, and book publishers have compiled rules of style for their own use. Some of the more complete ones have now been published and made available to the general public. We have adopted for our own guidance the "Manual of Style", issued by the University of Chicago Press. It seems to us to be the most complete and satisfactory. The edition we have is the 7th (1920), but a later one has been issued. This Manual gives authoritative rules for capitalization, punctuation, use of italics, divisions, quotation, footnotes, tabular material, etc. "The Style Manual

of the Government Printing Office", Revised Edition, 1924 (Washington, D. C.), covers somewhat similar ground, yet it is highly specialized and perhaps not so satisfactory for our purposes. Of greater general service is the "Suggestions to Authors of Papers Submitted for Publication by the United States Geological Survey with Directions to Typewriter Operators", 1916 (Dep't of the Interior, Washington, D. C.).

There are now a number of other booklets for writers, several of which are quite recent. These manuals, for the most part, give instructions for assembling the data into a unified whole, and lay less stress on the technique of preparing the manuscript for the printer. In this group we mention first Vizetelly's "The Preparation of Manuscripts for the Printer", Eighth Edition, 1924 (\$1.50, Funk and Wagnalls Co.). This book contains some things not found in the others, but it is too brief on rules of style to serve our purposes. A more recent one is, "Preparation of Scientific and Technical Papers", 1927, by Trelease and Yule (\$1.50, Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore, Md.). This booklet contains much more material on the technique of style, and indicates the usage in a large publishing house for scientific material. The latest booklet to reach our attention is "A Manual of Thesis-Writing for Graduates and Undergraduates", First Edition, 1934, by Cole and Bigelow (75 cents, John Wiley and Sons, New York). Emphasis is more on composition, less on rules of form, or technique. It contains a lot of practical help to the beginner in scientific writing. These booklets are all interesting and helpful. Unfortunately, not one of them is complete, and it is impossible to single out one for special recommendation. Composition (expression of ideas) is one thing; reproduction of it on the printed page is another thing. The best usage is being worked out for the latter, just as the rules of grammar have been developed long since. Writers of today should become familiar with the results of efforts to codify the best usage in printed style.

It may not be out of place in this connection to mention another class of books which treat more especially of grammatical construction. There are many school books in this group. Some of them will be found interesting and helpful by the writer who has passed beyond the school age, but who wishes to improve his English form. The ones mentioned have not been selected by a process of elimination, but have simply been found to be helpful. They are all inexpensive. "A Writer's Manual and Workbook", by Kies and others, 1933 (F. S. Croft and Co., New York), is described in the Preface as "a combined review of grammar, concise rhetoric, handbook of revision, and exercise pad. It deals progressively with grammatical background, punctuation, mechanics, and fundamental rhetorical principles" "English Review Grammar", by W. K. Smart, 1925 (F. S. Croft and Co., New York). "The purpose of this book is primarily to furnish a review of English grammar for mature students who need a more thorough knowledge of the structure of the English language." "College Handbook of Composition", by Wooley and Scott, 1928 (D. C. Heath & Co., New York), is one of the most generally-used guides in English Composition, and may be especially recommended. "Sentences and Thinking. A Handbook of Composition and Revision", by Foerster and Steadman, 1923 (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston). This book has two objectives, namely, to show how to construct a sentence and how to revise a manuscript. It is a useful book. "Self-Aids in the Essentials of Grammatical Usage", by L. J. O'Rourke, 1927 (Educational and Personnel Pub. Co., Washington, D. C.). This is a somewhat elementary drill book in English

grammar, especially useful to the student who is working alone and has time for practice work.

We offer these suggestions because we are in a position to know that they will be appreciated by a great many of our readers who are also writers—not necessarily the “younger” writers only. We are also confident that the vast majority of scientific writers are not so proficient in the use of the English language but that they can well afford to spend some spare moments on books of this kind.

THE ARTICLE by Mr. Wing in this number of the BULLETIN shows an unexpected way in which migration data may be used. Detailed migration data carefully prepared and recorded may serve some future research in a manner which the original worker never dreamed.

MR. FRED J. PIERCE, Winthrop, Iowa, desires to secure Nos. 12, 13, 15 (1897), and 29 (1899) of the WILSON BULLETIN, with which to make his file complete. Incidentally, the Editor would also be glad to secure the following numbers for the same purpose: Ornithologists' and Oologists' Semi-Annual, Vol. I, No. 1, and Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 2.

OUR CUTS are now costing us about 30 per cent more than previous to the NRA codes. Therefore, we will have to ask our contributors and readers to be patient with fewer illustrations.

MR. W. H. HOFFSTOT, 14 East 55th Street, Terrace, Kansas City, Mo., has a printed direction sheet for building a serviceable bluebird house which he will gladly send free to anyone who furnishes a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

IOWA now lists thirty-eight state parks, with a total of 5,987 acres. The number of state parks in New York is sixty; in Michigan is fifty-three; and in Texas is fifty-one. The most important parks, from the scenic point of view, at least, are in mountainous country. In general this is true of the national parks. However, there are various reasons for preserving areas of prairie country also in the natural condition. This is being done chiefly by the establishment of state parks. Preservation of such areas means also the preservation of the flora and fauna.